UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.91/L.64
10 December 1997

ENGLISH ONLY

SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
New York, 13-22 January 1998
Item 17 (d) of the provisional agenda*

MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES: INTERNATIONAL NAMES MEETINGS, CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIUMS

Symposium on Geographical Names

Paper submitted by Austria**

* E/CONF.91/1.

** Prepared by Isolde Hausner, Chairperson, Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kartographische Ortsnamenkunde (AKO) (Board on Geographical Names of the Austrian Cartographic Commission of the Austrian Geographic Society), in connection with the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

97-38152 (E) 050198 060198

/...

On the occasion of the millennium of Austria and the 100th meeting of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (Standiger Ausschuß für Geographische Namen, StAGN) the "Symposium on Geographical Names" took place in Vienna, 10th to 11th October 1996. The scientific conference was attended by 81 participants from 6 countries. The results of the conference were published under the title "Kartographie und Namenstandardisierung" (Cartography and Names Standardization) Wiener Schriften zur Geographie und Kartographie, vol. 10. Ed. by I. Kretschmer, H. Desove and K. Kriz. Vienna 1997.

Within the scope of the conference 11 experts lectured on five main subjects. The introduction was given by J. Breu, who emphasized of the importance of national and international names standardization, by J. Sievers, who lectured on the tasks of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, which functions as coordinating committee between the German speaking countries (Austria, Switzerland, South Tyrol and the German speaking parts of Belgium), and by H. Desove, chair of the Board on Geographical Names of Austria, who reported on the rather difficult structure of this organization, which cannot be recognized as official authority, but functions as such.

The second section dealt with developing countries. F. Ormeling in his paper on The Importance of Standardization of Geographical Names in Developing Countries placed particular emphasis on the problems of geographical names standardization in the Third World, where it is closely connected with the development of a national identity. Moreover he dealt with geographical names in multilingual societies and arising problems, when the rights of linguistic communities are ignored.

The third main subject proceeded with multilingual areas. In this section J. Sievers lectured on The Standardization of Geographical Names in the Antarktis, where at present geographical names appear in about 20 languages and five different scripts. A Working Group on Geodesy and Geographic Information shall elaborate guidelines for procedures of naming as well as for the use of already existing names in this area. E. Spiess lectured on Standardization in Multilingual Areas. In an introductory chapter he commented on the recommendations of the various UN conferences on geographical names concerning this subject. Furthermore he gave an overview of the different use of geographical names in multilingual areas. He expressed the opinion that one considers it as fundamental right of minorities to use their own names, in general one can observe an increasing acceptance of such names.

The fourth main theme was dedicated to the linguistic aspects of geographical names. O. Back analized questions concerning foreign geographical names and their inclusion in texts or maps. In this context he dealt with the terms endonym and exonym as well as with transliteration and some aspects of transcription. I. Hausner spoke about the Linguistic and historical linguistic Aspects of Names Standardization. Among other things the three constituent factors concerning the linguistic aspect of national names standardization were elaborated on the evidence of the spelling of toponyms in the Austrian Map 1:50 000.

The fifth main subject was dedicated to Names Standardization and Practice. A. Hanle presented a paper on Toponymic Editing of Atlasses, Exonyms and Changes of Names. He dealt with some linguistic aspects of lettering, i.e. the correct spelling, transliteration and the wide scope of changes of names. P. Jordan in his lecture on Toponymic Editing of Atlasses on the Paradigma of The Atlas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe (AESE) illustrated general problems of naming in international scientific atlasses, which are connected with the following facts: addressing an international audience, exonyms and endonyms, transliteration, EDP processing of different alphabets, rendering of official multilingualism, and change of names. H. Meckel lectured on Toponymic Data Bases in Austria, he gave an overview on the toponymic data base GEONAM of the Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying, followed by a description of some main characteristic features of the data bases of the following institutions: Austrian Central Statistical Office, Hydrographic Central Office, Toponymic Committee of Salzburg, Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv.

The publication contains three additional papers.
H.-D. Pohl: The Spelling of Geographical Names in Austria with Regard to the Upcoming Orthographic Reform. In this paper he reports on the results and recommendations given by the working group "Orthographic Reform and Toponymy" of the Board on Geographical Names. R. Stani Ferti: Geographical Names and Mass Media, where he focusses his interest on mass media maps and the correct name for a topographic feature in these maps. The last paper by G. Gartner deals with Names and Lettering in Cartography, where he makes the attempt to present the manifold functions of lettering in maps.

---